



Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the W.A. Group

Royal Australian Ornithologists Union

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A GATHERING OF BOURKE PARROTS

The Neophema group are always a favourite with any one interested in parrots and the Bourke Parrots are probably more appealing than most. They may be seen in the drier areas of W.A.

On 20 April 1986, I made camp with a group of people in mulga country at a windmill about 20 kms east of Warburton. The countryside was very dry and had been this way for about eighteen months. Gnamma holes I knew in the area were dry. Hence my decision to stop at this watering place before dark to see what birdlife appeared. Camp was set up about 75 metres from the outlet pipe of the windmill, water from which emptied into a small earth dam.

As darkness set in and we were preparing the evening meal, two birds flew directly through our group about 1.5 metres above the ground. These I identified as Bourke Parrots, (sometimes referred to in these areas as Night Parrots). During the meal wild camels came to the dam to drink - four at first to be joined a little later by a further six. They made the most dreadful noises. During the night we were woken several times by more camels coming in to drink.

It was a warm night and while most were happy to sleep in tents, Bob Goodale and I were as usual sleeping under the stars. In pre-dawn darkness, with a faint glow of light in the

east, we were woken by the rush and whirring of hundreds of wings and the chirruping sound (similar to a flock of Budgerigars) of myriads of birds. Lying in the open wondering what was happening, we found the birds were literally brushing our faces and landing all around us. In some cases it appeared to be more a crash landing. We very quickly realised we were seeing the incredible sight of hundreds of Bourke Parrots coming to drink.

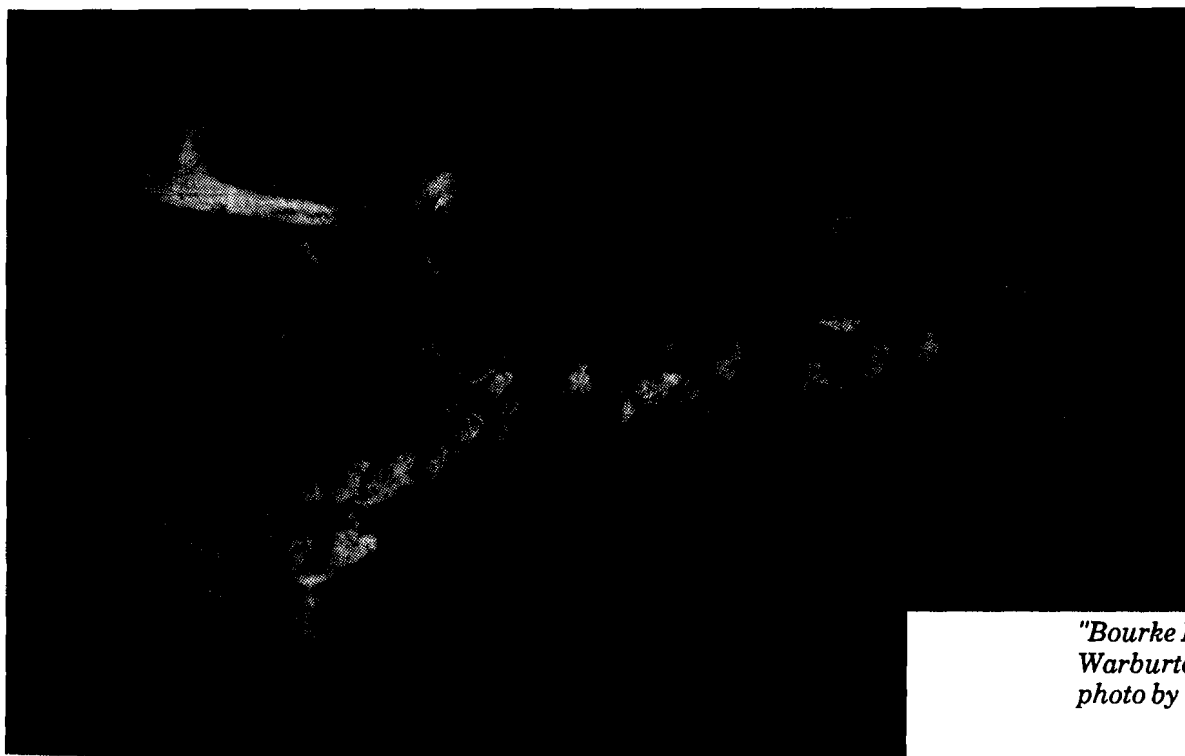
Although our bedrolls were about 100 metres from the dam some birds were landing nearby and running to the mound of the dam from this distance.

As the light became a little stronger we were able to stand near the dam and see hundreds of Bourke Parrots coming in and drinking. The ground behind the raised wall of the dam seemed to be a greyish mass of birds moving in for their turn to drink. Several small mulga trees on the dam edge were crowded. The spectacle lasted for an hour from dim light until just before the sun rose by which time virtually all the parrots had gone.

During the latter part of the visit to the dam I took some photos with the aid of a flash unit. I have been able to count some 440 birds in one shot and over 300 in several others. We estimated we saw at least 3,000 Bourke Parrots come to drink during the hour before the sun rose.

A few months later in August, after good rains throughout the centre, a birdwatching trip from Perth to Alice Springs resulted in no more than eight Bourke Parrots for the entire trip.

K. Coate



*"Bourke Parrots ea.
Warburton"
photo by Kevin Coate*

OBSERVATIONS

collated By Roger Jaensch and Rodney Vervest

The following records have been partly vetted and should receive further scrutiny before publication in RAOU Reports or in technical journals. Observers are encouraged to submit copies of field notes with all accounts of unusual sightings. The *Atlas of Australian Birds*, Serenty and Whittell's *Birds of Western Australia* and regional lists (e.g. Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne) by the W.A. Museum should be useful guides to records that are unusual with respect to distribution or status.

This series mainly covers the summer of 1986/87. Shire names are given in brackets. Where known, the observer is identified by an abbreviation - abbreviations are listed below.

Observations that appear in other articles in this newsletter may not be repeated here.

Please send details of sightings to 'The Observations Officer' at the W.A. Office of the RAOU.

DOWN SOUTH

Great Crested Grebe - 5 pairs with young, 28/1/87, Goollelal Lake (Wanneroo) - BL

Hoary-headed Grebe - 920, 26/12/86, Forrestdale Lake (Armadale); many pairs breeding - DJ

Australian Pelican - 55, 20/10/86, Nerimba Cay, Peel Inlet: 10 on nests - AD * 12, 28/11/86, Nerimba Cay: dead young - AD

Darter - 20, 13/12/86, Byenup Lagoon (Manjimup): equal to highest count in Waterbird Usage Study 1981-1985, (250 wetlands) - RV

White-faced Heron - 120, 9/1/87, Byenup Lagoon (Manjimup) - RV

Little Egret - 10, 10/1/87, Coodanup (Mandurah) - PW

Rufous Night Heron - 1, 3/2/87, corner Alexander and Beatrice Roads, Dalkeith (Metro): a dead immature bird - RW

Little Bittern - 1, 5/12/86, Spectacles Swamp (Metro): heard calling - RJ, PC * 1, 28/1/87, Goollelal Lake (Wanneroo) - BL

Black Bittern - 2, December 1986, Joondalup Lake (Wanneroo): report from far S end of lake - MHB

Australasian Bittern - 4, 2/11/86, Charsley's Swamps, E of Esperance: 4 calling birds - RV, RJ * 1, 28/11/86, calling in swamp SE of Byenup Lagoon (Manjimup) - RV *

1, November 1986, Vasse Estuary (Busselton): in low rushland at W end of estuary - RJ * breeding, December 1986, Lake Pleasant View (Albany) - TB

Straw-necked Ibis - 1000-1500 pairs breeding, 8/12/86, West Corio Swamp (Murray) - PRH

Royal Spoonbill - 1, 29/11/86, Nambung Lake (Gingin) - BB, AB

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - 37, 15/3/86, Fitzes Swamp (Kojonup) - WJM

Wandering Whistling-Duck - 1, 2/1/87, Perry Lakes South (Metro) -

Freckled Duck - 10, 3/11/86 and 1/1/87, Namburup Swamps (Esperance): paperbark thickets - RV, RJ * 10 (9 males), 5/11/86, Tyrell's Yate Swamp (Esperance): not breeding in this swamp - RV, RJ * 2, 6/11/86, Jerdacuttup Lake (Ravensthorpe): in dense thickets; this lake was deeply flooded in 1986 - RV, RJ * 2, 7/11/86, Yellilup Swamp (Jerramungup): in flooded yates - RV, RJ * 3, 5/12/86, Spectacles Swamp (Metro) - RJ, PC * 2, 1/1/87, Coomalbidup Swamp: Yate Swamp W of Esperance - RJ

Australian Shelduck - 11 782, 30/11/86, Lake Clifton (Mandurah) - MHB * 12 000, 22/11/86, Lake Gore (Esperance) - JE

Grey Teal - 10,000, 27/12/86, Vasse Estuary (Busselton) - RJ

Chestnut Teal - pair with 8 young (3 weeks old), 6/11/86, Jerdacuttup Lake (Ravensthorpe) - RV, RJ

Hardhead - adult with eleven young (10 days old?), 6/11/86, Jerdacuttup Lake (Ravensthorpe) - RV, RJ * 310, 23/11/86, Forrestdale Lake (Armadale) - DJ

Maned Duck - 179, 14/12/86, Chittering Lake (Chittering) - BK

Blue-billed Duck - 1/11/86, Mortijinup Lake (Esperance): nest with eggs in a tussock - RV, RJ * 121, 7/12/86, Mongers Lake (Metro): with young - NB

Square-tailed Kite - 1, 27/12/86, near Brookton: being chased by a Little Eagle - MiB, MaB * 1, 3/1/87, 30 kms S Coolgardie - MiB, MaB * 1, 26/1/87, in jarrah forest about 20 kms SE Harvey - Mib, MaB

Collared Sparrowhawk - 2, 13/12/86, Bungendore Park (Metro): a pair nesting in jarrah tree - BBa, MC, ND

Peregrine Falcon - 1, 30/12/86, Vasse Estuary (Busselton) - BK

Buff-banded Rail - parents with chicks, late December, Alfred Cove (Metro) - MM * 3, 18/1/87, Swan River (between Maylands Jetty and peninsular): one adult with 3 downy young - BK

Baillon's Crake - 1, 14/11/86, Cracker's Swamp (Dandaragan): in low shrubs with a fine rush - BB, RJ * 1, 26/12/86, SW of Forrestdale Lake (Armadale) - DJ

Spotless Crake - 1, 3/10/86, Westfield Park Primary School swamp (Kelmescott) - GM * 6, 26/12/86, Forrestdale Lake (Armadale) - DJ

Painted Snipe - 3, 29/11/86, Bambun Lake (Gingin) - BB, AB

Pied Oystercatcher - 13, 4/1/87, Swan foreshore at Dalkeith - PB

Lesser Golden Plover - 31, 31/12/86, Rushy Point, Little Grove (Albany) - MN * 2, 21-23/1/87, Carnarvon: in company with Bar-tailed Godwits and Banded Lapwings on oval - GS

Hooded Plover - 20, 3/11/86, Pink Lake (Esperance) - RV * 1, 6-14 December 1986, swamp near Wannamal - BB, AB

Large Sand Plover - 10, 31/12/86, Rushy Point, Little Grove (Albany) - MN * 2, 10/1/87, Creery Island (Mandurah) - PW

Eastern Curlew - 3, 22/12/86, mouth of Preston River (Bunbury) - RP * 7, 10/1/87, Creery Island (Mandurah) - PW

Whimbrel - 1, 21/11/86, Alfred Cove (Metro) - PRH * 2, 22/12/86, mouth of Preston River (Bunbury) - RP

Wood Sandpiper - 64, 30/1/87, McLarty Lake (Murray): highest count in S of State - RV, RJ * 2, 31/1/87, near Wannamal Swamp - BB, AB

Grey-tailed Tattler - 2, 22/12/86, mouth of Preston River (Bunbury) - RP

Common Sandpiper - 4, 19/10/86, Yealering Lake nr. Yealering - PBr

Gallinago (Pin-tailed ?) Snipe - 1, 23/1/87, Bibra Lake (Metro): diminutive bird, direct but laboured flight; a few weak calls - MCr

Black-tailed Godwit - 1, 10/1/87, Coodanup - PW

Bar-tailed Godwit - 456, 10/1/87, Coodanup - PW

Great Knot - 18, 21/1/87, Wilson Inlet (Denmark): first in this area - LB

Long-toed Stint - 49, 30/1/87, McLarty Lake (Murray): average summer count over 4 years = 45 - RV, RJ

Broad-billed Sandpiper - 1, 24/10/86, Goegrup Lake (Murray): probably this species; feeding with Red-necked Stints - AD * 1, 22/12/86, mouth of Preston River - RP * 1, 14/1/87, E end Wilson Inlet: standing amongst Red-necked Stints - LB * 1, 29/1/87, Freeway foreshore, South Perth: caught by Wader Study Group.

Ruff - 1, 25/1/87, Wannamal Lake (Gingin): first record north of Perth? - JL * 2, 30/1/87, McLarty Lake (Murray) - RV, RJ

Red-necked Phalarope - 1, 25/11/86, Lake Hinds (Wongan-Ballidu): first south-west record away from Perth area - OM

Oriental Pratincole - 1, 30/1/87, McLarty Lake (Murray) - RV, RJ

White Winged Tern - 16, 24/11/86, Vasse Estuary (Busselton) - RJ

Fairy Tern - 57, 18/12/86, artificial Boat Harbour, Mandurah: 10 birds on nests; colony increased to about 80-100 breeding pairs by mid-January - AD, DGW
Crested Pidgeon - 2 chicks, 1/2/87, 45 kms W Cranbrook: breeding record; birds extending their range west. - DGW
Purple-crowned Lorikeet - flock of 5000+, 9/2/87, Byenup Lagoons (Manjimup): one flock moving NW - BH
Regent Parrot - 2, 12/11/86, Red Gum Pass (Stirling Ranges): reported nesting in a wandoo tree - RSm
Cockatiel - 1, 2/11/86, Centre Rd, Kelmscott: male bird - GM
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo - 1, 6/12/86, Yangebup Lake (Metro): young bird being fed by two Yellow-rumped Thornbills - BBa, MC, ND
Tawny Frogmouth - 1, 31/10/86, Havelock St, West Perth: juvenile on lawn outside building - MHB * 1, 13/12/86, Bungendore Park (Armadale) - BBa, MC, ND
Fork-tailed Swift - 48, 8/1/86, Eyre Bird Observatory - RS
Tree Martin - 1000+, 16/1/87, Alfred Cove (mostly on the sports ground) - RS
Crested Shrike-tit - 1, 12/11/86, Donnelly River Mill - RS * 1, 28/12/86, Minvolara Swamp (near Bremer Bay) - BB, AB
Western Whipbird - 1, 10/12/86, Anderson Lake (Tambellup) - MGr
Rufous Songlark - 2, 30/12/86, Forrestfield (Metro) - RS
White-fronted Chat - 100+, 11/1/87, in paddock off Gnamarra Rd, (Wanneroo) - GS
Little Crow - 38, 11/1/87, lake Wannamal (Gingin): flying high and calling, moving S - DGW

UP NORTH

Black Bittern - 1, 29/11/86, Bell Gorge - BW, GH
Grey Falcon - 1, 29/11/86, Bell Gorge - BW, GH
Oriental Plover - 1, 19/9/86, 30 km SE of Camp 'Nifty', 60 km W of Telfer - JBr
Roseate Tern - 12, 23/11/86, Barred Creek (N of Broome) - BW, GH
Barn Swallow - 1, 16/11/86, Camp 'Nifty': exploration camp 60 km W of Telfer - JBr * 130+, November, Lake Eda, E of Broome - BW, GH

AB - Anne Buchanan	MM - Michael
AD - Austin Daw	Morecombe
BB - Bruce Buchanan	MN - Margaret Nash
BBa - Bryan Barrett	NB - Norah Brockman
BH - Bessell Hanekamp	ND - Norma Duff
BL - Barbara Longmuir	OM - Otto Mueller
BW - Brice Wells	PC - Pauline Clay
DGW - Doug Watkins	PB - Phyllis Bentley
DJ - David James	PBr - Phillip Brace
GH - Gail Hooper	PRH - Peel Howden
GM - Greg Marston	PW - Peter Wilmot
GS - Geoff Shannon	RJ - Roger Jaensch
JBr - John Brooke	RP - Ross Payton
JE - Jack Ewert	RS - Rod Smith
JL - Jim Lane	RSm - Ray Smith
LB - Lola Broadhurst	RV - Rodney Vervest
MaB - Mandy Bamford	RW - Rosemary Whish-
MC - Marjory Clegg	Wilson
MGr - Michael Craig	TB - Tony Bush
MHB - Mal Graham	WJM - Dusty Millar
MHB - Mary Bremner	WZ - Wayne Zadow
MiB - Mike Bamford	

JULIAN FORD 1932 - 1987

Julian Ralph Ford was one of the leading ornithologists both in Australia and internationally. While a less frequent visitor to meetings of recent years he had a long association with WA birding. He was Secretary of the RAOU in WA for eight years, Secretary of the WA Naturalists Club for two years and State organiser of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme for ten years. He organised the RAOU Australasian Congress in Perth in 1961.

Julian graduated in physical and organic chemistry from the University of Western Australia in 1955 and commenced work as a chemist in private industry. In 1960 he joined the staff of Perth Technical College and later became one of the early members of the staff of WAIT when he joined their Department of Chemistry in 1968.

Julian was able to use his chemistry knowledge in his bird studies, particularly in problems relating to the pigmentation of feathers and in the application of biochemical approaches. His work was primarily concerned with the speciation, hybridisation, origins and evolution of Australian birds. He introduced innovative techniques and methodologies which have since been adopted by other workers in the field. His work on sibling species, hybrid zones, the speciation mechanisms of arid zone birds and Australian mangrove avifauna were outstanding. He pointed to a habitat bridge north of the Nullarbor plain connecting South-West WA and Eyre Peninsular birds and new speciation concepts. In many ways his work was ahead of others in the field. His conclusions have been convincing and have not been criticised in the scientific literature.

His work brought him national and international recognition. Regarded as one of the most able of evolutionary biologists in Australia he was the first Australian ever to receive the Frank Chapman Fellowship of the American Museum of Natural History in 1976.

In 1982 Julian was invited to become a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists Union, a recognition limited to 75 recipients world wide and limited to four in Australia. Julian was awarded a PhD in 1983 in Zoology by the University of Western Australia.

Julian not only set high standards for his students (about which some protested) but for himself, as his achievements testify. Having travelled widely in all parts of Western Australia and bringing considerable knowledge and expertise to many bird topics, Julian was never afraid to put forward his views boldly and forcibly. He occasionally had the impatience of the person with great knowledge for those of lesser stature. As a result not all found Julian a comfortable colleague. However, he was always open to modify his views, was never pretentious and often almost shy. He grew on those who came to know him.

Scientific ornithology has lost a great leader. His published work, over 130 scientific refereed papers, will stand as a fitting memorial which will continue to influence and guide ornithology for many years.

COMMITTEE 1987

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WATERBIRD STUDIES

RAOU SURVEY OF EGRET COLONIES

Many thanks to all those who contributed information for this important survey. Special appreciation should be given to Judy Jenkins who helped with coordination and publicizing. Judy also arranged an aerial survey through which a new colony of Great Egrets was found.

This season five known colonies of the Great Egret were discovered to be inactive. These were Toolibin Lake (Shire of Wickepin), Tyrell's Yate Swamp (E of Esperance), a swamp near Lake Gore (Esperance), Chandala Swamp (Chittering) and a swamp W of Wokalup (Harvey). Five active colonies were found to have established at Ludlow Swamp (Busselton; 40-45 pairs), Australind (Australind Egret Swamp; 15-20 pairs), S of Pinjarra (30-40 pairs), West Corio Swamp (N of Pinjarra; 8 pairs) and at the South Perth Zoo (10-15 pairs). West Corio Swamp was not previously known and was found also to include a colony of between 1500-2000 pairs of Straw-necked Ibis. This was a result of the aerial survey - the birds, especially egrets being obvious from the air. Colonies S of Pinjarra and at the South Perth Zoo were not widely known.

Many potential egret breeding sites were investigated, i.e. tall paperbark swamps between Perth and Bunbury and yate swamps between Albany and Esperance. Given that some active colonies occurred in small swamps (less than 1-2 hectares), other colonies may still be discovered among the numerous small wetlands that occur in the aforementioned regions.

Three pairs of the Little Egret were found breeding in a paperbark swamp S of Pinjarra. This is a new breeding locality for the species. Australind Egret Swamp is the other known colony in the south of the State but Little Egrets did not breed there during the 1986-87 season. This species bred at Australind in each of the three previous years.

Of the five active colonies of Great Egrets in 1986-87, only one was in a nature reserve (Australind Egret Swamp Nature Reserve). Most colonies are threatened in some way by either death of paperbarks (Ludlow Swamp), clearing (West Corio) or chemical pollution (Australind).

During 1987-88 we will monitor breeding at the ten known localities and attempt to discover new colonies particularly in the Albany and Esperance districts.

REMOTE WETLAND EXPEDITION

No doubt readers will recall the Remote Wetland Expedition to Lakes Argyle and Gregory in August 1986 (reported in Western Australian Bird Notes No. 40 and the December issue of the National Newsletter). Nearly half a million waterbirds of 66 species were counted at these wetlands by 13 observers.

In 1987, we plan to investigate another 'remote wetland', possibly Lake McLeod (N of Carnarvon). Lake McLeod is supplied by seepage of underground sea-water and by intermittent rivers and is known to sometimes support large numbers of waders.

Details are yet to be finalised for the '87 Expedition but it will probably go ahead around August/September. Please keep this opportunity in mind when planning your leave etc... check the June issue of Bird Notes for details.

REGULAR MONITORING

Waterbird data sheets have continued to arrive since May 1985. The efforts of all observers who have continued monitoring and those who have initiated monitoring at other wetlands are thankfully acknowledged. The RAOU's waterbird data-bank has become an effective tool in waterbird conservation. Data for the 18 month period to December 1986 have been processed and will soon be entered onto computer: approximately 500 individual surveys covering 160 wetlands are represented.

Copies of the summary print-out of this data will be made available as soon as possible.

In building up this data-bank on waterbird usage of wetlands throughout the south-west of Western Australia we are keen to incorporate counts from any wetland in the region. Comparisons between wetlands will be most effective if more wetlands are incorporated in the data-bank.

A report of the Regular Monitoring programme will be prepared during 1987 concentrating on wetlands (reserve and non-reserve) that are important and threatened. Other wetlands may be given a less detailed treatment.

GREAT DUCK COUNT 1987

Many nature reserves, and some sites not in reserves, were confirmed as important for waterfowl (ducks, swans and coots) during the Waterbird Usage Study (1981-85). The Department of Conservation and Land Management and the RAOU recognised the value of annual monitoring at a sample of wetlands throughout the south-west of Western Australia and inaugurated the 'Great Duck Count' in March 1986. This was based on two objectives:

1. to monitor annual changes in populations of waterfowl in Western Australia, and
2. to identify sites that are important as refuges for waterfowl.

During the period 8-16 March 1986, 870 wetlands were investigated by over 140 observers in the south-west of Western Australia. Thirteen remote wetlands (i.e. in the North and East sectors of the State) were also included. In excess of 106 000 swans and ducks and a total of 17 000 Eurasian Coots were tallied. The significance of these results may become apparent after a series of annual counts has been completed.

In 1987, the Great Duck Count will be held from 7-15 March

Our aims in 1987 will be to achieve the two major objectives and, as a result of the previous Great Duck Count, a further set of detailed objectives:

1. to involve many more observers and thereby increase the number of wetlands surveyed. For the 1987 GDC we hope to involve up to 250 observers;
2. to achieve the best possible percentage of repeat surveys of sites surveyed in the 1986 GDC. (The extent of rainfall in 1986 will affect distribution of waterfowl and therefore selection of some sites to be surveyed in 1987);
3. to survey 'new' wetlands (particularly those that are 'known' to be holding water this season);
4. to survey sites that could provide refuges for Chestnut Teal. The tally for this species was low in the 1986 GDC.

We anticipate that regular volunteers will form the backbone of the 1987 GDC. In addition many more observers, particularly from the country, will be encouraged to participate. We ask that 'experienced' duck counters encourage newcomers to participate. Some observers may wish to act as regional organizers in building a network of Great Duck Counters.

Previous experience with counting is not essential for participation in the GDC.

It is important, however, that total counts are achieved for swans, ducks and coots. Wetlands covered should be within the observer's ability to achieve the most accurate results.

The data forms will probably be as for the 1986 GDC. These are simple and easy to use for both observer and organizer. Preliminary results will be forwarded to all observers early after the completion of the Count.

Assuming this issue of Bird Notes reaches you by the 1st March, 1987, there will still be an opportunity for you to be involved in this interesting and enjoyable event.

Please contact Rodney Vervest at the RAOU office NOW and indicate

- * your address, phone number
- * preference for particular wetland (if any)
- * if willing to be directed to a wetland and distance prepared to travel.

REMAINS OF OLDEST KNOWN BIRD

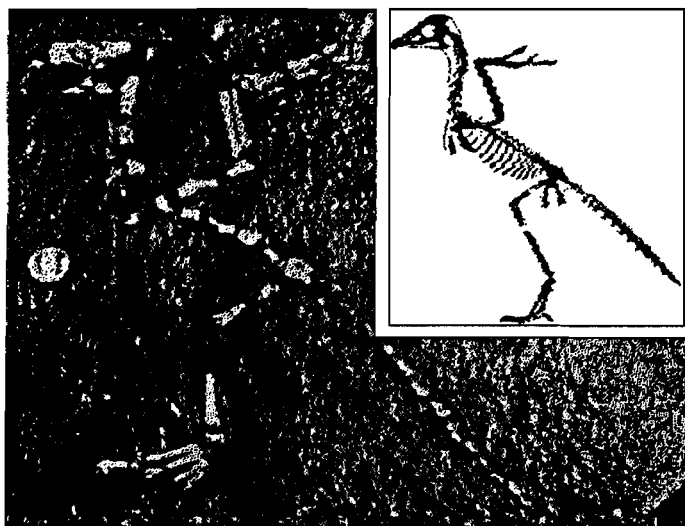
The remains of the oldest known bird, a crow-sized creature that lived 225 million years ago, have been unearthed in western Texas by scientists at Texas Tech University.

The researchers excavated two specimens of the bird from a mudstone quarry near the small town of Post. An associate professor of geology who headed the team, said the remains were 75 million years older than *Archaeopteryx*, a strange part-bird, part-reptilian creature that until now was considered to be the oldest bird.

The discovery - a new genus that will be named *Protoavis*, for "ancestral bird" - is more birdlike in appearance than *Archaeopteryx* whose remains were discovered over a century ago in a limestone quarry in Bavaria.

The professor said he believed *Protoavis* could hear and communicate with others of its kind, could fly short distances, and might have had brilliant plumage for camouflage in the forests. Like *Archaeopteryx*, he added, the juvenile and adult skeletons of *Protoavis* that were unearthed exhibited prominent reptilian features, such as clawed fingers, a tail, and teeth. Modern birds are toothless.

Compared to *Archaeopteryx*, *Protoavis* appeared to be more advanced on the evolutionary scale because its bones were more birdlike than those of *Archaeopteryx* and because it had lost the teeth in the back part of its jaw.



Remains of oldest known bird

The Chronicle of Higher Education September 3, 1986

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

The year 1986 finished as one of the best in the nine years that the Observatory has been operating. The number of visitor nights was 1,128 almost 10% higher than the previous highest.

Financially the year was also the most successful to date. In January we were able to purchase the vehicle that we have been dreaming of for the last five years - a Hilux Dual-cab 4WD. The Hilux, which cost \$12,800, is a 1983 diesel model with 50,000km on the clock. It can comfortably carry five people inside and their gear on the back. 'Tommy' will be retired after giving us six years of faithful service.

Rob and Jan Hill will be returning to Perth in mid-February. The success of the Observatory in 1986 owes much to their efforts and hospitality. We thank you, Rob and Jan, for all that you have put in and look forward to seeing you again at meetings and excursions.

NEW WARDENS

The new Wardens for Eyre are Gail Hooper and Brice Wells. Gail and Brice will be known to many members of the Group as they have been active 'birders' in W.A. over recent years. If you haven't seen them around for a while it's because over the past year they have been enjoying the splendours of the Kimberleys. Be WARNED after your next visit to Eyre they will have convinced you that the next place you have to go birding is the Kimberleys!

'DELETED' COMMON BRONZEWING BACK AT EYRE

The identification of Common Bronzewing at Eyre has been a problem over the years. In the first Eyre Bird Observatory Report they were 'rare; single birds'. By the third Report their status had become 'The early records of the species are probably errors. The species is thus deleted'.

It is with pleasure that I (along with at least two Common Bronzewings), report that they do occur at Eyre. During some hot weather in mid-January 1987, the said 'deleted' birds were seen in the company of Brush Bronzewings coming to drink at the water tray on the underground tank. Back on the list they go!

THE WADER STUDY GROUP

The most important news from the WA WSG is that banding activities have recommenced around Perth. Our first evening netted only seven Red-necked Stints, but we hope that future evenings will be more successful. Banding will be carried out approximately every fortnight at sites such as Pelican Point and Alfred Cove and all interested persons are welcome to join us. Please call Mike Bamford (444 0482) to find out when and where the next banding evening will be.

There are two interesting recoveries to report; one local and one far afield. A Great Knot, banded in August 1982 on Eighty-Mile Beach, was recaptured by researchers from the East China Normal University, Shanghai, in April 1984. It can take some time for information like this to get back to us. A much less ambitious Black-winged Stilt, banded at Pelican Point in 1981, was found dead at the Bayswater Bird Sanctuary by Eric Singleton a few weeks ago. After six years the band was so worn as to be almost illegible. This Black-winged Stilt recovery illustrates the value of taking a closer look than you might like at dead birds.

We recently visited the Freeway Foreshore (just south of the Narrows) where large numbers of waders had been reported roosting in the afternoons. We saw about 3,000 birds mostly Red-necked Stint, 10 Red-capped Plover and one Broad-billed Sandpiper, a species rarely seen on the Swan River.

Of the Red-necked Stints, 12 were recaptures, all originally banded by the WA WSG on the Swan River. One of these had a minimum age of 13 years. Another interesting feature of the catch was that only 13 of the Stints were first year birds (juveniles). In previous years, first year birds have made up 30-40% of our catches.

If you were one of the many people involved in the wader count programme, the data you collected has contributed to the soon-to-be-available book, *Shorebirds in Australia* (author Brett Lane). Pre-publication offers have already been distributed with an earlier WA Bird Notes. The book brings together the current state of our knowledge of shorebirds. Incidentally, I'm not sure why the collective term "shorebirds" has been used in place of the more familiar "waders". Instead of having to explain to people that herons aren't waders, we will now also have to convince them that Silver Gulls aren't shorebirds! However, shorebirds is the fashionable term overseas just now and by whatever name they are called are a fascinating group of birds. This book will make a valuable addition to any birdo library.

M. Bamford

This is the first of a series of short articles to assist with sea-bird identification of the *Mollymawk* group.

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS, *Diomedea chlororhynchos*

This is the smallest form in the group of albatrosses known as Mollymawks and is the most common albatross found close to land about Western Australia's coast. As with all albatrosses, the nostrils lie outside and to the side of the culminicorn. This is a diagnostic feature if you should find a beach-washed bird. Comparison with the bill profiles given inside the cover of *The Birds of Australia*, (Simpson & Day) is recommended.

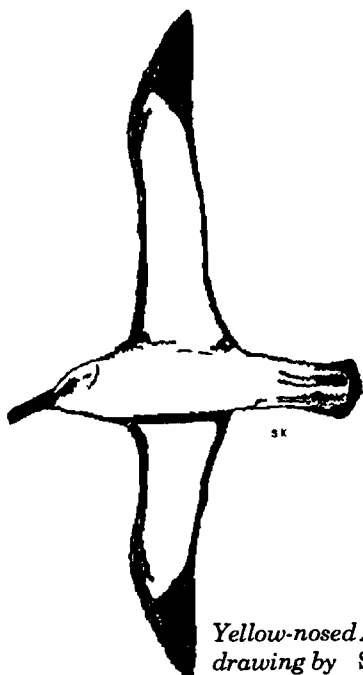
Field identification should be based on the underwing pattern. This is quite distinctive - mainly white except for black primaries and narrow margins with the leading edge broadest. Bill colour is black with a yellow culminicorn and, if seen, is a diagnostic feature. The juvenile bird shows little yellow on the bill. The bird is noticeably smaller than the Shy Albatross and this, with its black bill, should make separation possible. Black-browed Albatross have thick dark underwing emargination and the adult has a pale bill.

There are two subspecies with *chlororhynchos* being confined largely to the South Atlantic and *bassi* to the southern Indian and Pacific oceans. *D. chlororhynchos* has a grey head whereas *bassi* is largely white. Of all the albatrosses the Yellow-nosed favours warmer waters and is found well into the tropics. It may be seen off the southern coast of WA throughout the year but is most common between April and November.

In the southern Indian Ocean *D. chlororhynchos bassi* breeds at St Paul, Amsterdam, Prince Edward Island and the Crozets. Juvenile birds seem to disperse widely and do not breed during the first five years or more. Adult birds may be more sedentary and breeding is a long business with the cycle lasting 8 months. Adults share nest building - the female does the construction whilst the male fetches material. Both birds share incubation and rearing of the young.

Like other albatrosses it is a long lived bird with one bird being recorded to be some thirty-seven years of age.

S. Keeling



Yellow-nosed Albatross : Race *bassi*
drawing by S. Keeling

ART EXHIBITION - AUGUST 14-19

The 1987 Art Exhibition will be held in The Perth Concert Hall on the above dates.

Prospective exhibitors may obtain forms for the submission of entries from the RAOU office; 30/15 Oglivie Road, Canning Bridge. Tel. 364 6202.

In order to mount and produce another successful exhibition the help of members is required. Please inform the RAOU office if you are willing to give assistance with any or all of the following tasks:-

Supper for the opening function
Display/hanging on 13 August
Dismantling of exhibition 19 August
Preparation of invitations

Sale of art works and other materials - persons are required for mornings, afternoons and evenings of each day of the exhibition from Friday 14 August to Wednesday 19 August inclusive.

NEWS CUTTINGS NEEDED

News cuttings from local papers and copies of Press releases are filed in a Scrapbook at the RAOU office. If you can supply any for 1986 please drop them in to the office. Please collect cuttings during 1987.

BIRDLISTS NEEDED

We would like to maintain Birdlists at the RAOU office, as comprehensive as possible, for country birding spots. These can be provided to interested persons. Please help by supplying copies of past lists from your personal records. If you have a lot of such material, please send a list of places for which you can provide a birdlist.

LAKE MEALUP PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC.

Lake Mealup in Murray Shire is close to the Harvey Estuary. It is an important wetland for waterbirds and waders and is one of the few wetlands in the coastal plain near Perth that has not been significantly altered by agriculture, drainage etc. The Lake Mealup Preservation Society currently owns about 100 hectares of the Lake Mealup area. It aims to restore and conserve the Lake as a wildlife sanctuary and to purchase further areas when able. Other aims are to foster research in wetlands and increase community awareness of their value.

The Society has both Full and Associate membership. If you wish to give support to the worthy aims and projects of the Society please contact Jock McLaren or Chris Judges (381 6120) or the RAOU office.

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

THE BIG SWAMP BIRD PARK

On September 14 1986, Dr Stephen Davies, Director of the RAOU, officially opened the Big Swamp Bird Park, revealing a plaque to commemorate the culmination of six years of planning, scheming and plain hard work by the S.W. Avicultural Society and friends at the Bunbury City Council.

The idea of the bird park was first mooted in 1980 when the Council was planning to turn a 60 ha. swamp area into a public recreation ground after filling about three quarters of it with town rubbish. A large section of swampland remains with reeds and low shrub. There are several pools, where waterfowl abound in many species and great numbers. The surrounding area has been grassed, trees and flowerbeds have been planted and contain a wide variety of native

plants and shrubs. Two ha. is fenced off for the Bird Park.

The present buildings at the park were arranged by the Council through the Commonwealth Employment Scheme. Two large aviaries have been landscaped to eventually hold a tropical scene for bower birds, catbirds and others of the tropics and rainforest. At present they hold some of the more unusual doves, Red-collared Lorikeets, some finches and a pair of Bush Stone-curlews. A number of Galahs and cockatoos provide entertainment in a roomy cage and peacocks, guinea fowl, ducks and Purple Swampheens roam the grounds around the lake and the penguin ponds - the penguins have yet to arrive.

The big attraction at the park is a walk-in aviary of some 1300 square metres by six metres high, which is a birdwatchers' paradise.. Oblivious of human visitors some 400 birds of 35 different species go about their daily chores of feeding, bathing, nesting, mating, etc. Adequate shelter is provided by two Moreton Bay fig trees and some Peppermint trees, which were on the site when the cage was built. Many native flowering plants have been added, which, with weeds and grasses, are left to proliferate in planned disorder.

For both the birdwatcher and photographer, the Big Swamp Bird Park can provide great attraction.

The Park is situated along Prince Philip Drive. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. all weekends and school holidays, or from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Admittance fees are: adults \$2, pensioners \$1, children 50 cents.

M. Owens

FAIRY TERNS NESTING AT MANDURAH

In early December Fairy Terns returned to the Ocean Marina at the mouth of the Peel Inlet to nest. In 1982, 1983 and 1984 some Fairy Terns had nested there.

Following unsuccessful nesting in 1982 and 83 the W.A. Group of the RAOU undertook some management of the colony in 1984. The actions taken proved insufficient and the Fairy Terns deserted their nests.

Consequently, when terns again commenced nest activity at the marina we determined to protect the colony from disturbance as far as possible. After gaining permission from the Department of Marine and Harbours, Mandurah Shire Council and the support of the Department of Conservation and Land Management we were in a position to fence off the nesting area.

In December a small group of members and two Wildlife Officers from CALM gathered at the site and erected a fence and signs. Visits through-out December and January showed the fence and signs to be a great success. Although some people climbed over the fence, it stopped all vehicles, most people and dogs. The colony grew to over 50 pairs and by late January many chicks could be seen from the fence. It is planned to remove the fence in February after all the chicks can fly.

We have shown that it is possible for Fairy Terns to breed successfully in the middle of a busy town if some thought is given to their protection.

D. Watkins

BELL GORGE - NOVEMBER 86

During 1986 we heard tell of Bell Gorge, one of the less visited ones along the Gibb River Road. It took us until November to find enough time to make our first visit but only four weeks to make our second.

The run to the site is across Silent Grove station and takes about an hour. Although the travelling is not very difficult, it is for four wheel drive vehicles only. Bell Gorge is one of the most spectacular in the Kimberley, but to see it all requires a good deal of walking, climbing or swimming. The spectacular birding sites, however, are along the creek about two or three kilometres before the place where you walk down the gorge.

On our two visits (both relatively hasty) we have seen 85 species which included the best raptor sightings we have had in the Kimberley. We saw 11 raptor species in all. This is impressive, but when you include Pacific Baza (both visits) a Black-breasted Buzzard and a Grey Falcon, it becomes brilliant viewing. By contrast many of the other sightings seem almost pedestrian - although a Black Bittern, two owls (Boobook and Barking), 11 species of Honeyeater, abundant Pheasant Coucals and Dollarbirds, Azure Kingfisher, White-quilled Rock Pigeon and eight species of Parrots/Cockatoos would seem enough for most birdwatchers.

Additionally Euros, Red Kangaroos, Agile Wallaby and Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby, plus feral donkeys, Mitchell and Merlon water Monitors, Gould's Monitor and assorted skinks and dragons. There are not surprisingly Johnstone River Crocodiles, but they didn't resent sharing their swimming holes with us. If anyone desires more explicit directions we can make them available on request.

G. Hooper, D. Kingston, B. Wells



*"Morning greetings from Australian Kestrel"
at entrance to Wongong Gorge, August 1986
photo by Peel Howden*

DEATH OF A PIED CORMORANT

I recently found a Pied Cormorant washed up on Lancelin beach. Dissection of its gullet revealed it had choked on a young Carpet Shark. The shark measured some 250mm in length and 50mm across the head and it had become twisted in the unfortunate Pied Cormorant's throat.

D. Beckingham

DO RAINBOW BEE-EATERS FOLLOW THE SAME MIGRATORY PATH EACH YEAR?

In 1986 I was fortunate to be in the garden at Salvado Road Wembley just at sun-down, both at the end of January and again early October.

At the end of a hot day on Friday 21 January, I heard the characteristic "wroot-wroot" of Rainbow Bee-eaters in flight and on looking up I saw 18 birds flying North. On Sunday 5 October at sun-down after a warm day, once again the characteristic "wroot-wroot" and there were 26 Rainbow Bee-eaters flying South.

M. Bremner

EURARDY STATION

I visited Eurardy Station, in Kalbarri district, 3 October 1986. There are some interesting lagoons there. At the time of my visit there was not much water despite good rains. One lagoon was dry.

Highlights were one Curlew Sandpiper and one Marsh Sandpiper, the latter a first for the Kalbarri Block. There were also five Lesser Golden Plovers. Only one Black-tailed Native Hen was seen in contrast to 229 in 1984.

N. Robinson

PLOVERS OUT OF TERRITORY

On 31 January at about 5 p.m., I stopped my car by some paddocks west of Mundijong to take a closer look at 5 Banded Lapwing, and noticed among them were many smaller birds. They were Red-capped Plovers and White-fronted Chats, each species numbering more than 20, and all apparently on the move westwards in a leap-frog manner. It seemed to me that the plovers were out of their usual territory. The paddocks were very dry.

R. Smith

CRIMSON ROSELLAS

At approximately 10.30 a.m. on Saturday 29 November, Norma Duff and I were driving along Cockburn Road toward Fremantle, having just left Woodman's Point.

A pair of parrots flew from the heath in front of the car and settled amongst the low bushes nearby. They appeared to be Crimson Rosellas.

We located the birds who were feeding on berries, and watched them for some fifteen minutes. I have in the past kept Crimson Rosellas and being familiar with the plumage could positively identify one adult and one immature. As they were obvious escapees I reported the sighting to the Avicultural Society.

B. Barrett

CARRABUNJUP RESERVE

When visiting Carrabunjup Reserve recently we disturbed approximately 400 Grey Teal. Immediately an Australian Hobby swooped in a fast low dive from a nearby Tuart and the Grey Teal promptly 'crash landed' on the water.

We sat down to watch. The Grey Teal were obviously nervous and three times in twenty minutes took flight. Each time the Australian Hobby swooped the Grey Teal 'crash landed' in the water. The Australian Hobby was unsuccessful. Eventually the Grey Teal gained the shelter of the thick melaleuca where cormorants nest.

Later we saw the Australian Hobby twice swoop into the cormorant nesting trees and both times saw the cormorants fly up in a dense cloud rather than diving into the water. The Australian Hobby attacked the cormorants in the air but each time they made a sharp turn to evade their attacker. We did not see a kill. We thought the Australian Hobby was not serious in its attacks on the Grey Teal or the cormorants.

However on retracing our steps we found a freshly dead Little Black Cormorant on the ground in the open. We had not seen it previously. Perhaps it had been struck in the air.

Other raptors seen were a Marsh Harrier, a White-breasted Sea-Eagle, a Brown Falcon, a Whistling Kite, an Australian Kestrel and two Little Eagles, one mature and one immature.

J. & H. Start

OLDEST KNOWN HUMMINGBIRD IN NORTH AMERICA IS CAPTURED

A research assistant at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in Gothic, Colorado has captured the oldest known hummingbird in North America.

The bird, a female, is more than 11 years old. She was banded on June 21, 1976, when she was at least a year old.

The discovery of the bird was announced by the National Geographic Society.

The bird's age strengthens the laboratory researchers' belief that hummingbirds live longer than expected for their size.

Large animals tend to live longer than small animals, so, other things being equal, a tiny hummingbird would be expected to have a brief life span," said William A. Calder, a researcher at the laboratory who has studied hummingbirds for 17 years. He is a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Arizona.

The bird that was caught at the laboratory in August is a broad-tailed hummingbird, known scientifically as *Selasphorus platycercus*. Members of the species are about 3 3/4 inches long and weight about a seventh of an ounce.

Mr. Calder said he had heard of a 14 year-old hummingbird found in Brazil. That bird lived in a tropical forest and did not have to cope with migration, he said.

The bird found in Colorado is believed to have survived at least 10 trips to Mexico. She was released so that she could return there.

From Chronicle of Higher Education

ERRONEUS RECORD OF PLAINS WANDERERS

In reference to the report of Plains-Wanderers from WA in the last issue of WA Bird Notes (NO. 40, December 1986), it should be demonstrated that the Smiths' birds were definitely not Plains-Wanderers. Some of the more obvious reasons are listed below.

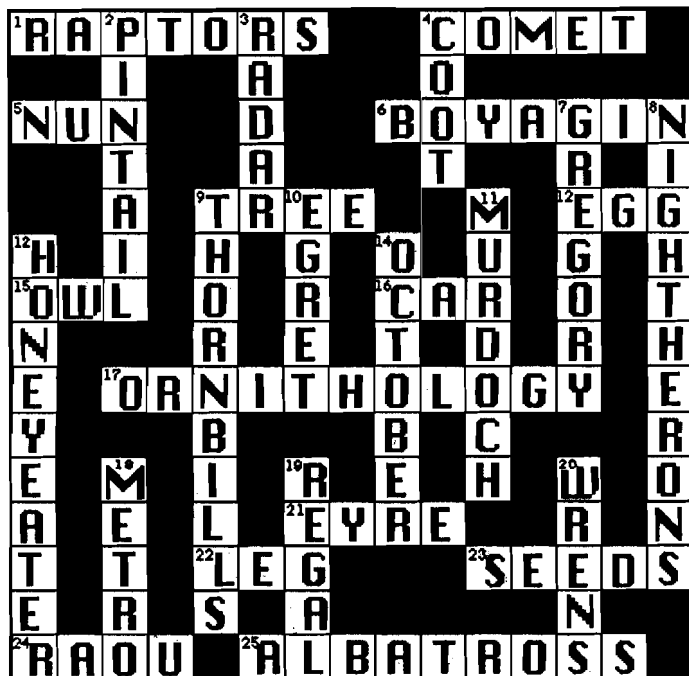
1. The Smiths first thought, that the birds seen were quail, was immediately dismissed because they were too large. Plains-Wanderers are smaller than Stubble Quail. Nearly everyone seeing Plains-Wanderers for the first time remark on how small they are. Practically all the field guides give the wrong impression and portray the birds as being larger than they are, relative to the quail.
2. The birds in question were seen at 2.30pm. It is a very rare event to see even one Plains-Wanderer by day, even in areas where they are common and can be readily captured by night.
3. A group of 8-10 birds was sighted. Plains-Wanderers are usually solitary. During the breeding season a pair, or a male and his 3-4 small chicks may be seen.
4. All the birds seen had black collars. If they were Plains-Wanderers then, they would have been females because the brown males contain no such distinguishing features. Again, this is an unrecorded and extremely unlikely situation for Plains-Wanderers to be found in.

5. Despite what some books say and what the Smiths saw their birds doing, Plains-Wanderers that are trying to avoid detection and move away from an observer do not remain in sight, nor do they stand very tall and imperiously. They sneak away in a crouching run.

By way of illustration of just how cryptic Plains-Wanderers are, let me describe how I attempted to catch three of them with radio-transmitters, by day in 5 hectare 'islands' of grass sparse enough to easily see a Pipit in. Armed with four receivers and antennas, a team of seven people followed each bird back and forth for over an hour in every case without ever sighting one. Eventually, two trackers fortuitously closed on the unseen bird from different directions causing it to squat. Then a quarter of an hour search ensued, until someone eventually almost stood on the bird causing it to run, whereupon it was readily captured and its transmitter removed.

David Baker-Gabb

CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION



MEETING REPORTS

THE 87th RAOU CONGRESS

The 87th Annual Congress was held in Adelaide on the 13th and 14th of December. It was great to meet up with so many old birding friends from all over Australia and discuss what is going on overseas with the many visitors.

Over the two days papers were given on a great variety of subjects ranging from *The role of birds in the control of a geometrid pest of "Pinus patula" in Papua New Guinea* (L. Lamothe) to *The Barn Owls of the Werribee Plains, Victoria* (D. Hewish).

The standard was high throughout and, just as importantly, many of the speakers were very entertaining so that I hardly ever slept through any of the papers. This is high praise as I have a record of having slept through almost every paper at a similar conference (though not about birds!).

I thoroughly enjoyed the Congress and would urge anyone who can possibly attend the 88th Congress to do so. Such a gathering really does put ornithology in perspective.

S. Keeling

CONFERENCE ON POPULATIONS AND MOVEMENTS OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS

The Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service has requested the RAOU to assess the viability of monitoring the populations and movements of Australian birds. To consider this request, a conference was convened on the 12th and 13th of December 1986 at the University of Adelaide.

I attended the conference, with a special interest in seabirds and also having participated in the South West Waterbird Study and the Wader Study Group. I was also interested to hear some practical suggestions on survey techniques of passerines. These topics were all addressed by the conference.

Dr Peter Smith was commissioned by the RAOU to convene the conference and to formalise the agenda. To this end Dr Smith produced RAOU report no. 25, 1986, which outlines objectives and suggested methods for monitoring waders, waterbirds, seabirds and land birds. Organisation and staffing, analysis, publication and priorities are also comprehensively covered in the report.

There was a good deal of both consensus and division amongst delegates as to the objectives of what is a most important project, and one which will take the RAOU into the 1990's. Few disputed that we know very little about population densities and movements of passerines and that these groups and seabirds might be targeted first. With seabirds there seems to be both a gap in knowledge and a dearth of observers who can identify species.

The conference seemed to avoid discussion of seawatching problems, apparently on the basis that amateurs are not able to learn field identification skills. This seems to overlook the evidence of five years ago when most members knew little of

waders and it was meeting this challenge that did so much to strengthen membership through the interest generated by studying such a seemingly difficult group of birds. I feel sure that seabirds as a group are the last great challenge for Australian birders.

Methodology for passerines was discussed at length and it was decided to assess the merits of rolling bird survey and area searches techniques. These approaches, as opposed to transects or quadrant systems, seem to be the most acceptable as they provide sufficient detail while being less tedious in the field than others.

The conference was brisk and addressed the complexities as thoroughly as possible within the time constraints. There was a degree of opposing opinion on almost every aspect tackled, but if the level of discussion is an adequate measure then I am sure that we can all look forward to a project that will eclipse even the staggering Atlas accomplishment.

S. Keeling

MIGRATION NEAR EILAT - 24 November 1986

Steve Morgan, a teacher on exchange from the United Kingdom spoke about a bird banding expedition he joined in Israel near Eilat on the Gulf of Akaba. Steve, one of some 2000 bird banders in the UK is interested in migration and the Gulf of Akaba is one of the more significant migratory routes. It is estimated that some 600 million birds pass the area in 60 days from mid-August to mid-October. Despite heat and fairly frenzied banding activity to cope with the high numbers netted, Steve had time to photograph the general area and many of the migrants including a number of relatively rare birds and these illustrated his address. A most interesting insight into birding elsewhere.

B. Buchanan

EXCURSION REPORTS

1986 THREE PARK SEARCH

Seventeen people in five teams participated in the 1986 Three Park Search. This year the six sites were chosen because little or nothing was known about their birdlife. Thanks to those who participated, who while enjoying themselves providing valuable information.

The table shows the number of teams that surveyed each site and the total number of species seen at each site.

NUMBER OF TEAM VISITS AT EACH SITE AND TOTAL NUMBER OF SPECIES SEEN.

SITE	No OF TEAMS	No OF SPECIES
Trigg open space	2	20
Lake Goollelal	3	41
Maylands foreshore	5	41
Martin parklands	2	34
Yangebup Lake	2	53
Casuarina	1	32

Although they have other conservation values it appears from this Search that the two sites most in the news, the Trigg open space (Marmion Road extension) and Casuarina (Prison to be built on System Six reserve), both have a low number of species.

This year, once again, the team of Steve & Diana Keeling and John Hansen birdwatched diligently right through the whole twelve hours and succeeded in seeing the greatest number of species during the day. However every team received a prize for some aspect of their contribution e.g. the Denny Brockman Hale team for least Distance Covered. Different prize categories for next year though.

The Three Park Search was successful this year in providing some useful birding information and will be run along similar lines next time.

The magnificent food prepared by Ann Shannon, for the Christmas Party made a great day even better!

R. Van Delft

KARAKIN/WANERIE - 1-2 NOVEMBER

Eight people survived a sudden heat of 32 degrees and observed a variety of bush and waterbirds, some breeding, on this outing. At the sandpits on K.W. Road, the Spotted Scrubwren, Splendid Fairy-wren, Southern Emu-wren and the Calamanthus were seen and White-cheeked Honeyeaters were particularly conspicuous. Brown Honeyeaters were found feeding young in a low nest.

Karakin Lake contained a good deal of water this year and hundreds of Black-winged Stilts and Straw-necked Ibis were present. We flushed over 40 Rufous Night-heron from eucalyptus trees on the southern edge. A Masked Woodswallow was sighted on the road to the Lake by John Hansen and others.

We made short stop at Doopiter Swamp to see Maned Duck, Blue-billed Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, Australian and Hoary-headed Grebes. A Little Eagle was seen overhead.

At Wanerie Lake two Darters' nests contained three young each and Yellow-billed Spoonbills were just beginning to nest nearby.

On the following day some of us looked for bush birds on a property on Cowalla Road. Little Wattle-birds were very common and Welcome Swallows were nesting in limestone caves.

D. Beckingham

BOYAGIN ROCK NATURE RESERVE 8 NOVEMBER

Despite the weather, a dozen optimists gathered at Boyagin Rock on November 8th. To the accompaniment of lightning, thunder and persistent rain, a walk around the Rock was undertaken. Due to the weather, few birds were seen. However, the science of scatology gained some new followers as debate raged over the origins of the various scats found under the sheltering trees. An easing of the weather at lunchtime resulted in more birds being seen in the picnic area than during the morning's walk.

Species seen included Scarlet Robin, Rufous Whistler, Brown Falcon, Grey Shrike-thrush and a pair of Rainbow Bee-eaters and their burrow.

Most left for home after lunch; those remaining ventured into the drizzle in the hope of improving the bird-list. A brief burst of sunshine added Western Rosella, White-browed Scrubwren, Little Wattlebird and White-cheeked, White-eared and Brown Honeyeaters among others. Over-all, despite the weather and the small number of birders, a total of 30 species was recorded.

C. Hudson

WELLARD AND ROCKINGHAM LAKES - 23 NOVEMBER

Sixteen people gathered for the 8 a.m. start to the Wellard Lake. The Wellard Lake was originally a clay extraction site used by Alcoa until four years ago. The Company is now rehabilitating the area with help from the RAOU to create a refuge for waterfowl. Thousands of trees and rushes have been planted by volunteers and an artificially flooded pasture has been maintained by Alcoa. Both Pacific Black Ducks and Australian Shelducks had young on the main lake and there were good views of Elegant Parrots sitting on the fence posts. Several Yellow-billed Spoonbills flew right over our heads showing their broad, flattened bills.

From Wellard we moved on to Walyungup Lake where we watched Fairy Terns fishing on the east side. As we arrived, we flushed a 'Bare-breasted Gilgie digger' which, after initial surprise, resumed foraging in the mud with her young. Access to Walyungup Lake is now from the north-west corner where a parking area has been provided.

Our final stop for the morning was the parking area at the north side of Lake Cooloongup. There were 12 Red-necked

Stints, a Grey Plover and Red-capped Plovers feeding in the shallows. It is worthy of note that vegetation around the edges of Lakes Cooloongup and Walyungup has recovered significantly since vehicle access to the shore has been restricted.

An enjoyable morning's birding - about 40 species in all.

M. & M. Bamford

PUBLICATIONS

YOU CAN BUY THE FOLLOWING ITEMS at the RAOU Office, Suite 30, first floor, 15 Ogilvie Rd, Canning Bridge 6153, W.A. Don't forget to add the cost of postage and packing if you are not calling to pick up purchases. Items are usually available for purchase at RAOU meetings and excursions.

This arrangement provides a service for members and much needed funds for the Group.

- * **The Atlas of Australian Birds** --- \$49
(produced by the RAOU: shows distribution of bird species)
- * **overlays for the Atlas** --- \$6
- * **Methods for Censusing Birds in Australia - 1982** --- \$5
(produced by the W.A. Group, RAOU)
- * **Report of the Middlesex Study Centre** --- \$5
- * **A Pocket List of Australian Birds** --- 70 c
(a handy checklist; produced by Canberra Ornithologists Group)
- * **A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia**, by G. Pizzey -
--- \$17 (1985 reprint, paperback; small format)
- * **The Birds of Australia**, by Simpson and Day --- \$30
(1984, large format; text and plate facing each other)
- * **Every Australian Bird Illustrated** --- \$22
(large format; 563 colour photos)
- * **In Quest of Bower Birds**, by N. Chaffer --- \$26
(large format; text and photographs of all species)
- * **A Field Guide to the Birds of W.A.**, by Storr and Johnstone --- \$14
(W.A. Museum 1985 edition; solely birds of W.A.)
- * **New Zealand Birds** --- \$17
(1983 edition; large format; text and photographs by several authors)
- * **The Birdlife of Rottnest Island**, by Saunders and de Rebeira --- \$8 (1985; text; colour plates; maps)
- * **Eyre Bird Observatory: Report 1981-83** --- \$5
- * **RAOU Calendar 1987** --- \$8
- * **Bird-call tapes** --- \$10
(3 choices; mostly W.A. birds; announced version)
- * **RAOU Emu badges** --- \$3
- * **RAOU ties** (navy blue or maroon) --- \$10
- * **Western Australian Bird Notes** --- \$1.50 per issue
- * **New Colour Guide to Hong Kong Birds** by Viney and Phillips --- \$13
- * **Shorebirds**, by Hayman, Marchant and Prater --- \$49
- * **The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds** --- \$28
- * **The Great Australian Birdfinder** by Michael Morecombe --- \$55

If you have suggestions for titles that we could obtain, please give details to the W.A. Office. Please bear in mind that the W.A. Group is reluctant to spend money on bird books that do not sell readily.

Also, few local publishers or distributors are prepared to offer a discount on bird books. Consequently our choices are rather limited.

***Videos for hire from RAOU office** (COST \$5 each plus postage)

The Language of birds, World of Birds Osprey, Short-eared Owl, Seabirds, The Masterbuilders, The Petersfinger Cuckoos, Kingdom of The Lyrebird, The Secret Reeds

ADVICE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editor of W.A. Bird Notes would like to ask those contributing written material to the newsletter, to note the following points:

* copy should be typed or legibly written with **DOUBLE** spacing.

* text should be paragraphed, preferably containing not more than four or five sentences;

* careful attention ought to be given to use of upper and lower case letters: e.g. 'a flock of unidentified cormorants', or 'a flock of Great Cormorants'.

* a suggested method for recording dates and localities is, e.g. '11 May 1984, seven km SW of Moora' (i.e. spell out one to nine, then use figures).

* use the RAOU recommended English Names for Australian birds: these are given in a pocket list available at the W.A. Office,

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

for June 87 issue - April 19, 1987

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday 1 April - Film Evening

Alexander Library Theatre, Francis Street, Perth at 8pm. Films to be shown are "Kingdom of the Lyrebird" - a Lazlo Erdos Nature film, photographed in the natural environment, dealing with one of the world's largest rarest and most spectacular songbirds, and "Wetlands" a Film Centre Perth production. \$5 admission, children and concessions \$3. Light refreshments.

Tickets are available from the RAOU office.

Saturday 11 April - Excursion: Whiteman Park

Various recreational activities are proposed for this park as well as a plan for a central wildlife reserve. The park is some 2600 hectares and has been surveyed as part of the Metro Bird Project. This outing will introduce members to the area and help in our knowledge of it.

From Marshall Road West Swan turn into Dulwich Street and continue (1km) until you see the entrance to Mussel Pool picnic area where we shall meet in the car park (western side) at 8.30 a.m.

Easter Campout in the SW Vineyards

Farmhouse accommodation with breakfast and lunch provided. Cost about \$30 per day per person including a boat trip out of Augusta. Limited places left.

ph Steve Keeling on 291 9561 for further details.

Friday 24 April - Combined Meeting.

Native Birds and Plants - A developed relationship

A combined meeting of the RAOU and the Eastern Hills Branch, Wildflower Society will be held in the Glen Forrest Hall. Address - Marnie Road. This is 1st turn RIGHT off Hardey Road when approaching from Great Eastern Highway. Time - 7.30 p.m.

Saturday 25 - Monday 27 April - Campout: Shannon River Basin

The Shannon Park consists of an entire river basin and various habitats are found within its borders. We may look at one area at the request of CALM but otherwise there are no surveys planned, the aims of the campout being to allow members to get to know some of the park and to make a bird list for our information and CALM'S. We shall stay at the camping grounds at the former timber milling townsite of Shannon. Facilities include toilets, BBQs, water and showers.

There are also 2 wooden huts with fireplaces available to the public on a first-come first-served basis (no advance booking possible). These contain wooden bunks only - no mattresses or other bedding supplied and no cooking facilities. The huts would take 3 to 4 people if you are lucky enough to get one. There are also sites available for those bringing a caravan.

To get to the old Shannon townsite take the South Western Highway south from Manjimup on the road to Walpole. About half an hour from Manjimup and about 3 km past the Northcliffe turnoff you will come across the signs to the camping grounds. Meet here at 9 a.m. and again at lunchtime (1 p.m.) on Saturday. Enjoy a casual weekend of bird-watching. All welcome.

Leader: Volunteer needed. (Perth Co-ordinator: Ian Standing ph 3877326 h.).

Monday 4 May - Meeting

Herdsmen Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 p.m. Speaker: Dr Stephen Davies, Director RAOU, - "The RAOU, past, present and future".

Saturday 9 May - Excursion: Lake Mealup

Meet at 9a.m. at the Pinjarra Trotting Club in Greenlands Road Pinjarra, 2-3 kms south of the town on the South Western Highway. Allow 1 -1 1/2 hours from Perth. People are invited to camp overnight but need to be self-sufficient including bringing your own fresh water. On the Sunday a bird count (specifically waterbirds) is planned. For those unable to make the Saturday rendezvous contact Jan Knight, 387 5371 (h) prior to the date for directions to the lake.

Leader: Peter Wilmont

Sunday 24 May - Excursion: Lake Carine

Meet at 2 p.m. at the car park off Duffy Road (Riding for the disabled stables).

Leader: Geoff Shannon

Monday 25 May - Meeting

Herdsmen Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 p.m. Presentation by the Wader Group, Doug Watkins and Mike Bamford.

Sunday 14 June - Excursion: Julimar State Forest

The timber is a mixture of jarrah, marri and wandoo and with other habitats is an interesting area. Crested Shrike-tits have been seen here. We may look at Chittering Lake on the way home. Meet at 8.30 a.m. at Bullsbrook in Chittering Valley Road.

Leader: Clive Napier

Monday 22 June - Meeting

Herdsmen Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 p.m. Nests and the Nest Record Scheme. Several speakers on nests, nest finding and what information is collected and how it is used.

Sunday 5th-Saturday 11th July - Eyre Excursion

Saturday 11th July - Moore River National Park area.

Sunday 9th August - Seabirds

Sunday 23rd August - Whiteman Park

Saturday 12 September - Pipidinn Road

Sunday 4th- Saturday 10th October - Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve and other proposed wheatbelt reserves. (CAMPOUT)

Sunday 11th October - Wongamine Nature Reserve, Toodyay

Saturday 17th- Sunday 18th October - Eneabba wetlands. (CAMPOUT)

Sunday 8th November - Alfred Cove

Saturday 14th- Sunday 15th November - Woodanilling (CAMPOUT)

Saturday 5th December - Three park search and Social Night.

COATE'S WILDLIFE TOURS

You are invited to share the companionship of other enthusiasts on our wildlife tours to:-

Sale River and Prince Regent River **9 - 19 May 1987.**
Expedition to remote Kimberley region.

Kimberley - Pilbara Birdwatching Tour **5 - 18 June 1987**
Areas around the Fitzroy Flood Plains - Camballin - coastal areas near 80 Mile Beach and Cape Keraudren - Pilbara areas - Millstream.

Kimberley and Kakadu National Park **5 - 25 July 1987**
From Kununurra take in areas - Lake Argyle - Timber Creek - Katherine - U.D.P. Falls - Yellow Waters - Obiri Rock - Darwin - and return to Broome via Gibb River Road.

Flinders Range and Coober Pedy **10 - 30 October 1987**
Visiting Wilpena Pound - Arkaroola in the North Flinders with an optional extra there of the famous Ridgetop Tour - the fascinating mound springs north of Marree with interesting birdlife all the way - Gibber Birds, Orange Chats and many others - Nullarbor Caves.

Fitzgerald National Park and Bremer Bay **9 - 13 November 1987**
This tour will be based at Bremer Bay using the Shire's Recreation Camp and staying in cabins. Daily excursions will be made into the National Park and to areas around Bremer Bay. The pace will be relaxing with plenty of time to study birds and wildflowers.

Special 'Across the Top' Expedition **July-August 1987**
A special two months expedition across Northern Australia has been organised for the Belgian Ornithological Group AVES. It is possible for interested birdwatchers to join this special tour for the whole or part of the time.

For information on these and other tours contact:-

Kevin Coate
21 Acanthus Road
WILLETTON WA 6155
Telephone; (09) 457 1515